Chanting of Vedie Mantras in American Senate

†510. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India are aware that the meeting which was held on 12th July. 2007 in American Senate, commenced with the chanting of Vedic Mantras and this was the first incident of its kind in American history;

(b) whether this day was the most glorious and happiest day for the entire country as Rigveda, Upnishada and excerpts from Gita were chanted as a prayer in American Senate; and

(c) whether Government of India could also select a day in Parliament when the mantras of our thousand years old glorious granthas would be chanted in Parliament, although these shlokas have been written on the walls of Parliament House?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government of India have seen reports indicating that a ceremony that included chanting of Vedic mantras took place in the US Senate on July 12, 2007.

Delays in getting passports

511. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Competent Authority had initiated any action on the applications submitted by Democratic Youth Federation of India during the month of June, 2007 on the delay to get new passport and the imminent corruption associated with above delay in the Regional Passport Office at Malappuram district headquarter, Kerala;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (c) No. The Ministry did not receive an application from Democratic Youth Federation of India during the month of June, 2007 on the delay to get new passport and the imminent corruption associated with above delay in the Regional Passport Office at Malappuram district headquarter, Kerala. However, the Ministry is aware of some delays in the issue of passports at the Passport Office, Malappuram mainly due to shortage of staff, which has been rectified now. No specific instance of corruption has come to the notice of the Ministry at the Passport Office, Malappuram.

Discussion with Government of Indonesia

512. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the topics discussed between Governments of India and Indonesia during his visit to that country early this year;

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† Original notice of the. question was received ill Hindi

(b) the treaties signed by the two countries as a result of the discussions held; and

(c) the action so far taken by the two Governments to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The topics discussed included bilateral cooperation in the political, defence, trade, investment, economic cooperation, tourism and cultural spheres.

(b) and (c) The Foreign Ministers of India and Indonesia signed the Agreed Minutes of the Third Joint Commission Meeting between India and Indonesia and a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Vocational Training Centre in the Construction Sector in Aceh, Indonesia.

Talks with Government of Pakistan

513. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether talks of Government of India with Government of Pakistan have been suspended;

(b) whether any political party has made any request with Government for suspension of talks;

(c) whether any dates for resumption of talks have been fixed as on date; and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No. The fourth round of the Composite Dialogue was initiated by the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries in March, 2007 and discussions on seven of the eight subjects under the Composite Dialogue Process have been completed.

(b) Government are not in receipt of any such request.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

. . **Case of Mohammed Haneef**

514. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had taken up the case of Mohammed Haneef, who was in detention in Australia, with Government of Australia;

(b) if so, the details of the stands taken by Government as regards charges against him and the cancellation of visa of Shri Haneef; and

(c) the response of Government of Australia in this regard?